

CAZON  
SM  
-D31

# dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

## In this issue:

- Poster gets people thinking about violence in media/telling 40km  
redaction opens some opportunities/PAIN LANGUAGE 2
- How to know if it's really "plain language" 2
- Adoption disclosure helps birth search/Our winning  
worms waste not/International Year of Tolerance 3
- TECHNOLOGY TIPS: Email and privacy on the job/LIBRARY  
CONFER 4
- Communication skills/PEOPLE AND PLACES 4

JUN 27 1995  
University of Toronto

## EASED expands its mandate



about EASED, so team members Laurie McEvoy, Suzanne Smith-Bayley and Jill Sawchuk showed how MCSS and EASED are responding to employment accommodation requests by ministry employees with disabilities. The presentation was given May 18 at Queen's Park.

The Ontario

There are about 2,400 people in Ontario Public Service who have identifiable disabilities, and our ministry's employment accommodation team is poised to help some of them get on with their jobs.

The ministry's Employment Accommodation Service for Employees with Disabilities (EASED), which is unique in the OPS, is gearing up to extend its services to two other ministries over the next two years. New staff resources are being added thanks to funding by Management Board Secretariat's Systemic Accommodation Fund.

The OPS Accommodation Directors Council requested a presentation

Human Rights Code specifies that employers have a legal obligation to accommodate employees with disabilities so that they can participate equally in the workplace.

"Accommodation" means providing devices, changing workplace practices, and/or adapting the environment to remove barriers so that employees with disabilities can do their jobs.

The EASED team is part of the ministry's Workplace Accommodation and Safety Services (WASS) section. It's unique in that the section combines units for facility management, occupational health and safety as well as accommodation under one umbrella, and all within the Human Resources Branch, noted Laurie.

Jill explained to the accommodation directors that accommodating employees involves several steps. The employee or his/her manager contacts the EASED team, who (along with the employee and manager) study the person's worksite and workstation, functionally assess the needs for accommodation, determine an action plan (which often involves adapting the workplace and barriers in it), then implement the ideas. EASED is the resource, and the manager and employee are the decision-makers.

Contact the EASED team at  
2 Bloor St. W., 30th floor.  
Or, call the team at  
416-327-4615.

Their services are available to MCSS staff province-wide.

June is Seniors' Month in Ontario, and this year's theme is Growing and Achieving Together. The Ministry of Citizenship sponsors Seniors' Month, and there are a number of events in many communities. If you'd like more information, please call 416-327-2422; toll-free, the number is 1-800-267-7329; TTY is 416-314-7831.

## ROW, ROW, ROW THE BOAT...



...and help city kids like these get a chance to try out rowing, as part of a program that's getting businesspeople — including ministry staff — behind the oars. Last year, a team of employees (mainly from Toronto Area Office) took part in the adult rowing league's Corporate Challenge, a program at Toronto's non-profit Bayside Rowing Club. For \$165 per

person, each team of 14 gets five hands-on learning sessions (one evening a week), plus two races per evening, followed by a barbecue. The first session is filled, but a second session begins in July; contact the Bayside Rowing Club at 416-968-1396 for more information. We'll bring you a full story about our intrepid ministry team in the next issue of Dialogue.

## A glimmer at the end of the tunnel: help for sole-support parents in Timmins

by Julia Naczynski

Sole-support parents in the Timmins area are upgrading their skills to become more employable, thanks to a collaborative effort by the federal government, local school board and MCSS.

Of the first 20 participants in Projet Amélie/Project Emly, 90 per cent are either working at full- or part-time jobs or are attending school or training for employment. One of the earliest participants in Projet Amélie has even graduated from a three-year course in child and youth services.

It began in 1991 when Suzanne Dupont of the Canada Employment Centre (CEC) in Timmins approached the local ministry office with the concept. She had been asked by the Timmins District Roman Catholic School Board for funding to sponsor a French-language education program that would enable francophone sole-support mothers to further their education. The proposal was for a 30-week program that would enable 10



Patricia Paananen (left) and Tracy Capyk (right) are learning community and living skills on job placement with employer Marjorie Schweng (seated) as part of Project Emly.

participants to obtain secondary-school credits toward a Grade 12 diploma.

Carole Demers and Julie Larcher, income maintenance officers in the ministry's Timmins office, were asked to refer candidates to the program. Candidates are either receiving social assistance from the province, or from the City of Timmins.

The program combines traditional classroom teaching with on-the-job training, say Carole and Julie. It includes life skills training from local agencies such as the Porcupine Health Unit, and covers subjects such as

Growing and Achieving Together  
Seniors' Month  
June 1995

Grandir et s'épanouir ensemble  
Le Mois des personnes âgées  
Juin 1995



3 1761 11547233 4



## ...Parents in Timmins continued from page 1



Teresa Boullard drives a forklift truck as part of her *Projet Amélie* job-placement duties at a building centre. With her is employer Lorenzo Melchiorre.

mental health and child care. Job placements are arranged after participants demonstrate a particular career interest.

The training costs of the program are paid for by Human Resources Development Canada. The CEC provides participants with a training allowance; the ministry provides a reduced Family Benefits entitlement, so there is a cost savings for the province.

Because the results of the first *Projet Amélie* were so promising, the program was expanded in 1992-93 to create *Projet Envy* for English-speaking participants. There is keen interest in the program locally — both the French and English programs get the maximum 10 participants, and the two teachers, Helene Petroski and Carol Guacci, would like to accommodate 15 participants in each program.

Some participants have moved out of town, but Carole and Julie say they know of two participants from the

1993-94 session who are now in their first year at college — one is studying social work, the other business administration. Another has applied to attend college this fall; two others are seeking information about applying.

The project is successful because everyone wants it to, says Carole. "We have all seen positive changes in clients' attitudes and in greater self-awareness," she says. "I feel that for some of our clients there is finally a glimmer at the end of the long and sometimes dark 'mother's allowance' tunnel."

Participants have a new outlook on life "and they feel there is something out there for them to move on to," agrees Julie. "The individual attention that recipients receive and the continuing team effort of all concerned make this program what it is."

"It's people working together to make something work."

## Lifting 40-km restriction opens some opportunities

from the MCSS Employment Equity Office

From July 1 to Dec. 31, 1995, the 40-km "area of search" restriction will be removed from all classified jobs advertised by MCSS for AM-19 level positions (and above) and financially-equivalent bargaining unit positions. Ministry employees throughout the province will be able to apply for any classified jobs advertised during this six-month period.

The ministry's Management Committee approved the pilot project. Although the option to advertise without geographic restriction has always existed, recently constraints have influenced restrictions on area of search to avoid the possible liability for relocation costs.

Management Committee's decision was made due to concern that most senior positions were located within

commuting distance of Toronto and that may have excluded many qualified people from applying for these jobs.

"The removal of the 40-kilometre area of search limitation should provide a broader pool of qualified designated-group candidates for job competitions," says Margaret Weightman, the ministry's director of Human Resources. "It's a win-win situation for both employees and managers because employees have more opportunities to apply for jobs, and managers will have a larger applicant pool to draw from."

If you would like more information about this pilot project, please contact Rosemary Horvath at the MCSS Employment Equity Office at 416-327-4811; or, contact your local Human Resources manager.



## HOW TO KNOW IF IT'S REALLY "PLAIN LANGUAGE"

How can you be sure you're using plain language?

- One easy way to rate the "readability" of your document is to check to see if most of the words are fewer than three syllables each.
- "Road test" your document by asking someone else to read your draft. A person who has little knowledge of the subject is ideal — check to see how many times s/he asks you, "What does this mean?"
- Now you can "field test" your document by asking a couple of colleagues to read it. Have them read it once, then ask how much

**PLAIN  
LANGUAGE  
PLEASE**

of it they understand without needing to re-read anything.

• You can try using grammar and style software packages, but use these as guides only, to help you spot errors. Ultimately, the reader is the best judge of whether or not your document is easy to understand.

## Poster gets people thinking about violence in media



A winning poster: seen in the photo are Peter Steckenreiter, the London Area Office manager; Assistant Deputy Minister of Program Management Sue Herbert, holding the winning entry; Colleen Manning, chair of LAAAC and a counsellor with London's Vocational Rehabilitation Services; and her LAAAC vice-chair, Gary Howlett, the area office mail/supply clerk.

London Area Office staff were the judges for a poster contest designed to raise awareness about violence and the way it is promoted in the media.

The London Area Abuse/Assault Committee (LAAAC), an internal committee of London area and local ministry staff which is funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate, chose "Violence in the Media: Are You Under the Influence?" as the theme for the poster campaign and for the 1994/95 term of the committee. The contest was open to residents of the London Detention Centre for Youth. A local art store, Graphix, donated some supplies, and the residents were assisted in designing their entries by committee members and art therapists Bonnie Bodnar and Karen Gingrich.

The residents were asked to think about the way violence is promoted in such media as music and music videos, advertising, cartoons, toys, television, magazines, commercials and newspapers. The content of the posters could reflect different types of violence and the way media

contributes to it.

A dozen entries were in the competition, and the entries were hung in a London Area Office boardroom and voted on by our staff. Prizes such as sweatshirts and hats were awarded to the winning artist and the other competitors.

The finished poster bears the caption *Kids See, Kids Do!* and shows a couple on a sofa, watching a television that's showing one person being beaten up by another; the couple are oblivious to the two youngsters behind them engaged in a similar scuffle (the attacker is looking over his shoulder to imitate what's happening on the TV screen).

The winning entry was printed in a limited edition of 100 copies, and 70 smaller copies were included as a hand-out at LAAAC's spring forum, a conference held to heighten staff awareness about issues of violence. Other copies of the poster were mounted and presented to forum speakers, local ministry offices and to the artist.

# Adoption disclosure helps birth search

—another in a series of public education stories by Communications and Marketing Branch

"Are you my mother?" is a touching children's book about a little bird that has fallen out of its nest and goes in search of its mother.

The story is especially poignant for thousands of adults who were adopted as children in Ontario, and are now searching for their biological mothers. In addition to this search for birth relatives by adoptees, there are biological parents in Canada and the United States searching for children given up for adoption decades ago.

The emotional desire to meet one's blood relatives is only one of the reasons people try to find out who was involved in an adoption years ago. Women planning to have children want to know if their biological parents have medical or genetic histories that could affect them. Adoptees may also discover that they are eligible to apply for dual citizenship and perhaps be eligible for employment in both countries.

The Ontario government began keeping records about provincial adoptions in 1921. Today there are more than 200,000 records of adoptions that have taken place in

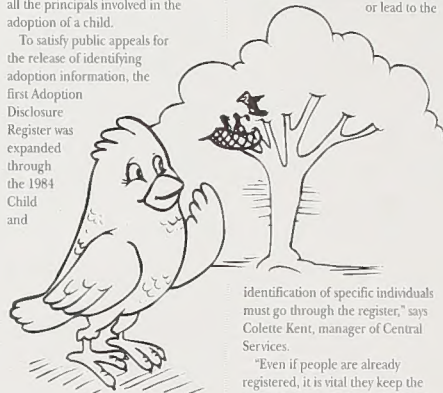
Ontario since that year.

Prior to 1979, vital information that could identify biological parents or adopted children was classified and restricted under the Child Welfare Act to protect the privacy of all the principals involved in the adoption of a child.

To satisfy public appeals for the release of identifying adoption information, the first Adoption Disclosure Register was expanded through the 1984 Child and

to get background information. They can request non-identifying information such as a biological family's culture, heritage or a general profile of the immediate family.

"But information that can identify or lead to the



identification of specific individuals must go through the register," says Colette Kent, manager of Central Services.

"Even if people are already registered, it is vital they keep the registry informed of any changes," Colette cautions. Updated information—such as change of address or change of marital status—relieves the backlog of files that cannot be completed when researchers hit dead ends due to outdated and invalid information in applications. Adopted persons 18 and older,

birth parents or adult birth relatives—brothers, sisters and/or grandparents—are all eligible to file applications to Ontario's Adoption Disclosure Register. (Remember, the adoption must have been finalized in Ontario if the records are to be of help.)

They can contact the register to update family information, or to request identifying information or reunions, and adult adoptees can request an active search for biological relatives. However, both the adoptee and the birth relative have to be registered in order for a match to be made, and for identifying information to be shared.

Adopting parents are not eligible to apply to the register. However, they may request non-identifying information through a local child welfare agency.

The Adoption Unit has produced a booklet with more information. A copy of the booklet or an adoption disclosure application form may be requested by contacting the Adoption Disclosure Register, MCSS, 2 Bloor Street West, 24th Floor, Toronto ON M7A 1E9 (tel.: 416-327-4730; fax 416-327-0573).

Information and application forms are also available through local child welfare agencies such as children's aid societies or child and family services agencies.

## Our winning worms waste not

by Susan Best

Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls is home to about 700 adults with developmental handicaps, and workplace for about 1,000 full- and part-time employees. With a population of this size, vermicomposting has proven to be a valuable way of reducing the 825 pounds of wet waste that the centre deals with every day.

What is vermicomposting? Quite simply, it's composting with worms.

Prior to 1994, all of the centre's food waste was taken away by a farmer in the Smiths Falls vicinity, at an annual cost of \$18,000. When the farmer retired, the food waste began going directly to landfill. But then the centre



Vocational instructor Al Jordan supervises resident Matthew Fox in the vermicomposting building at RRC. (Our photographer caught Al on his last day of work after 31 years at RRC.)

acquired a food pulper, and the volume of food waste was reduced by half. While that was a big improvement, it was still a lot of waste to haul away.

The vermicomposting project currently processes about 10 per cent of the remaining food waste (10,000 pounds in 1994). The resulting high-quality compost is used at the centre by the Farms and Gardens staff to improve growing conditions. The best kind of earthworm for

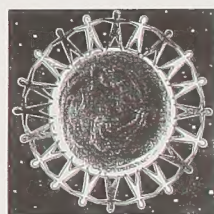
vermicomposting is the redworm. They are incredible garbage eaters and expel their own weight every day. Finished compost from vermicomposting can be harvested in as little as two to three months.

The original proposal to fund and implement a vermicomposting project at RRC was submitted to the Green Workplace—a section of Management Board Secretariat that promotes recycling and other environmental efforts in the OPS—in June of 1993. Approval was received in February of 1994 and the project commenced with 100 pounds of worms; currently there are double that amount.

Residents, along with staff from Vocational Services and Dietary Services, have worked on this project under the guidance of the centre's Environmental Action Committee. Everyone involved was thrilled to have our efforts recognized by placing under the finalists in the 1994 Ontario Waste Minimization Awards sponsored by the Recycling Council of Ontario.

Susan Best is communications co-ordinator at Rideau Regional Centre, Smiths Falls.

## An International Year for Tolerance



1994 was the United Nations International Year of the Family; 1995 has been designated as International Year for Tolerance. The purpose of the designation is to heighten public awareness of the threat to peace posed by lack of tolerance between nations, between communities and between individuals. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Then-prime minister Lester B. Pearson was instrumental in the formation of the UN in 1945. The Charter of the United Nations was adopted in San Francisco on June 25, 1945 and signed the next day; it came into force on Dec. 24 of that year.







## TECHNOLOGY TIPS

FROM INFORMATION  
SYSTEMS BRANCH

### E-mail and privacy on the job

E-mail, like all government records, is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)*. The Information and Privacy Commissioner has issued a number of principles which have been used in developing our e-mail guidelines.

- Users must be trained on security and confidentiality issues — including passwords — before being given access to the system.
- E-mail is for business use only, not personal communication.
- E-mail systems should not be used for the purposes of collecting, using and disclosing personal information without adequate safeguards, including technical means, to protect privacy and ensure security.
- An increase in the number of access points decreases the control over security and confidentiality.
- If e-mail is merely read and not used, it may be deleted; otherwise e-

mail should be printed and kept with the relevant file.

- E-mail communication does not have a retention schedule per se; the applicable retention schedule is the same as the file they belong to.
- E-mail is a record, and must be retrievable.
- A user's password is confidential, and sharing it amounts to giving someone else full signing authority on your behalf.
- The privacy of e-mail users should be respected and protected and ministries should create and disseminate policies addressing this issue.

For more information or specific advice, please contact Jocelyne Samson-Gauthier, the FIPP Unit co-ordinator, at 416-730-6497 or on e-mail.

## People and Places



Al Jordan

**A**l Jordan decided to take Factor 80 and has retired after 31 years at Rideau Regional Centre in Smiths Falls.

Al decided he didn't want a fuss made, so he completed the retirement paperwork in secret; on his last day, he telephoned his co-workers as he was leaving the RRC grounds and invited them to a party at his home. Al was a vocational instructor and his wife, Wilma, is a residential counsellor at RRC. (See a photo on page 3.)

**Frank Fecteau** officially retires at the end of June after 27 years with the Ontario Public Service, 22 of them with MCSS. Frank began his career with the Ministry of Natural Resources as an information officer; he later joined MCSS as a communications officer for southwestern Ontario. He has also been a senior manager in Communications and Marketing Branch, was with Community Services, and is retiring as a planning officer with the Toronto Area Office. Frank was a charter member with the Information Officers' Forum (now Communicators' Forum, a voluntary organization for government communications staff); he also serves on the board for the Ontario Civil Service Credit Union.

**Kaca Henley** returns to the Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy as of June 21 as the senior child advocate for MCSS after a leave of absence.

**Abbie Lavigne Allan**, who left the ministry two years ago and is now a community newspaper editor, was recently elected a director of the 450-member Toronto Press Club. Abbie had a varied career with MCSS, where she was publications manager, French-language co-ordinator pay equity co-ordinator and

Management Support senior policy analyst, where she was seconded to the Long Term Care Project's Toronto office. She became editor of the *Lakesider*, a community newspaper published in the Beach area of east Toronto, in February. Abbie has degrees from Carleton University in journalism and general arts.

Some sections of **Financial and Administrative Services Branch** have relocated to 2 Bloor West. Most of the relocated sections are on the 11th floor, including the director's office; some are on the 10th floor. Phone numbers will not change. The relocating sections are **Purchasing, Financial Information Strategic (FIS) Operations & Support, Special Projects (CSD-FIT), Federal/Provincial Cost Sharing**, and the offices for **Mary Simpson** and **Jim Tighe**.



Friends, colleagues and family gathered in London recently to wish **Murray Hamilton** well in his retirement. Murray had been with the ministry for a number of years; he had been the regional director for the southwest region. He retired from the ministry as administrator for Oxford Regional Centre in Woodstock. Seen in the photo with Murray is Windsor Area Office manager **Shari Cunningham**. Murray was presented with an antique document box as a gift.

We want to hear from you! Let *Dialogue* know about retirements, staff changes and events in your workplace. Contact the editor, Julia Naczynski, with your items and photos (see box below for address).

## dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

*Dialogue* is published 10 times a year by the Communications and Marketing Branch of the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) to provide an information forum for all employees of the ministry. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect ministry or government policy.

Michael Kurus  
Director, Communications and Marketing Branch

Julia Naczynski  
Editor

Debbie Adamson  
Creative Services

Robert Miller  
Editorial Advisor

Please send story ideas, articles, photographs and news items about people and events, with your telephone number, to:

The Editor, *DIALOGUE*  
Communications & Marketing Branch  
MCSS  
7th floor, Hepburn Block  
QUEEN'S PARK ONT. M7A 1E3

Tel.: (416) 325-5168  
Fax: (416) 325-5172  
or e-mail the editor at NACZYSKI@

Next issue: July/August 1995  
Submission deadline: June 30

## LIBRARY CORNER

### ...FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION SKILLS

by Dolly Lyn, Library and Career Resources manager

"I hadn't yet learned what I know now — that the ability to communicate is everything." — Lee Iacocca, former chairman and chief executive officer of Chrysler Corporation, in his autobiography.

Among our library resources are various books and videos that can assist in eliminating the barriers to good communication.

### Videos

**Body language at work: for managers/** with Desmond Morris. 1992.

This is one in a series of four videos which examine the importance of using correct body language in various situations within the workplace.

**Closing the gap: gender communication skills.** 1994, 33 minutes.

This video-based training program can help resolve gender-related communication problems within a group. It focuses on how conversation styles, not relationships or the people themselves, can create misunderstandings and disappointments. Staff can learn how

to increase understanding and communicate in a more effective manner.

**How to listen powerfully: reduce misunderstandings, sharpen your concentration and hear more of what people are saying /** with Ron Meiss. 1990, 108 minutes.

Among some of the topics covered in this training video include: how to listen for unspoken feelings, attitudes or intentions; ways to listen objectively when you don't like what you are hearing and steps for keeping calm when someone else is angry. However, it does not deal with the multicultural aspects of listening and interpersonal communication.

### Books

**Manning, George and Kent, Curtis. Communication the miracle of dialogue.** South Western Publishing Co. 1988.

An easy-to-use workbook with exercises for personal development in the areas of communication and interpersonal relations. Includes a section on cultural differences of communication.